

## Abstract

CREATIVE PROJECT: Social Media and Crisis Communication: An Update to the 2000 National Education Association's Crisis Communications Guide & Toolkit

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This creative project suggests updates to the 2000 National Education Association Crisis Communications Guide & Toolkit that reflect crisis management theory and best practices in social media crisis communication. This project includes a literature review that establishes the theoretical foundation for a content analysis of crisis communication, and the content analysis identifies the best practices and recommendations for the update. W. Timothy Coombs's Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), a public relations theory that not only identifies possible crisis types an organization may face but also recommends appropriate crisis responses for each, serves as the theoretical basis.

Because there are few primary and secondary schools that have published crisis communication plans including social media contingencies, this project examines the crisis communication work of higher education institutions. A content analysis includes the four colleges and universities that won Circle of Excellence Awards from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) in the Issues and Crisis Management category since 2010. The content analysis findings inform the recommended updates to the 2000 National Education Association Crisis Communications Guide & Toolkit on the timing of crisis response,

the frequency of updates, the content of messages, the involvement of students, faculty, and staff, and the response to external constituents.